

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 OPR-02 TRSE-00

FSE-00 PER-03 /029 R

DRAFTED BY CA/SCS/RDB/JKH

APPROVED BY CA:RTHENNEMEYER

EA/ARN/ - HOWELL (PHONE)

TREASURY - O'HANION

SA - ROLAND

----- 109250

O P 221949Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 181625

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:CFED

SUBJECT:FEDERAL BENEFITS CHECKS

1. IN VIEW OF FURTHER PLANNED REDUCTION IN SIZE OF EMBASSY STAFF, LACK OF INTERNATIONAL MAIL SERVICE, AND DETERIORATING LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION, THE DEPARTMENT IS RECOMMENDING TO THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT THAT STARTING WITH CHECKS DATED AUG 3 THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL BENEFIT CHECKS TO LEBANON BE DISCONTINUED UNTIL CONDITIONS RETURN TO A MORE NORMAL STATE. HOWEVER, WHEN INTERNATIONAL MAIL SERVICE IS RESTORED TO BEIRUT, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO REESTABLISH A PAYMENT PROGRAM ONLY FOR THOSE BENEFICIARIES IN THE BEIRUT AREA WHO ARE ABLE TO REACH THE EMBASSY. SUCH A DECISION WOULD DEPEND TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THE EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

2. DEPARTMENT ALSO FEELS THAT IT IS A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS  
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SITUATION TO CONTINUE TO HOLD THE SEVERAL MONTHS BACKLOG

OF UNDISTRIBUTED BENEFIT CHECKS AT THE POST. THE EMBASSY IS THEREFORE REQUESTED TO INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF NUMBER CHECKS STILL HELD. IF POSSIBLE, THESE CHECKS SHOULD BE MARKED BY CANCELLED STAMP OR OTHERWISE RENDERED NON-NEGOTIABLE AND RETURNED ASAP TO THE DEPARTMENT, ATTENTION SCS, FOR APPROPRIATE DISPOSAL. IF THIS NOT PRACTICAL, THE EMBASSY SHOULD DESTROY THE CHECKS ON HAND AND INDICATE ON

THE LISTING OF RECIPIENTS THAT ACCOMPANIES EACH CHECK SHIPMENT WHICH CHECKS WERE DESTROYED AND WHICH WERE DELIVERED TO BENEFICIARIES.

3. THE AGENCIES PAYING FEDERAL BENEFITS ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER THE AUTHORIZATION OF PAYMENTS TO BENEFICIARIES WHO EITHER HAVE LEFT LEBANON AND ESTABLISHED ANOTHER MAILING ADDRESS OR WHO CAN REACH ANOTHER FOREIGN SERVICE POST, SUCH AS DAMASCUS, TO RECEIVE BENEFIT CHECKS. ADDRESSEE POSTS ARE ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE FEASIBILITY AND PRACTICALITY OF SUCH A TEMPORARY PROGRAM.

4. FOR ATHENS: THE EMBASSY IS TO RETURN TO THE DEPARTMENT, ATTN SCS, THE BENEFIT CHECKS BEING HELD FOR SHIPMENT TO BEIRUT. ROBINSON

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